

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of Surveillance

Marriage and divorce certificates serve as legal documentation of marital status, and provide limited surveillance information useful in describing current and changing societal attitudes that impact individual and family relationships. Successful marriages often result in emotional and economic supports helpful in achieving adequate levels of health and living standards for family members. Divorce is associated with the loss of psychological and economic supports, and with an increase in the risk of poor health and economic disadvantage for family members. Changes in marriage and divorce rates and demographics, such as the average age at marriage, can indicate population shifts in family size and family economic stability.

Source of Data: Certificate of Marriage

Information on marriages presented in this report is obtained from data recorded on the *Certificate of Marriage* completed for marriages that occurred in Louisiana in the 1999 calendar year. Louisiana law requires that marriage certificates be submitted by the parish clerks of court to the Vital Records Registry prior to the tenth of the month following the marriage. The law also requires that the social security numbers of the bride and groom remain confidential. It is estimated that certificates for at least 95% of marriages occurring annually in Louisiana are filed with Vital Records.

Source of Data: Certificate of Divorce or Annulment

Divorce information presented in this report is obtained from the *Certificate of Divorce or Annulment* and from summary divorce counts submitted by parish clerks of court for divorces that occurred in Louisiana in the 1999 calendar year. Louisiana law requires that divorce certificates be submitted to the Vital Records Registry prior to the tenth of the month following the divorce, and that the identities of the registrants remain confidential.

Unfortunately, many Louisiana parishes do not submit divorce certificates to the central registry, and incomplete information is submitted by many parishes that do file certificates. The divorce tabulations included in this report reflect summary divorce counts made by the clerks of court, as well as data derived from actual certificates received in the central office. Because of poor reporting, Louisiana is excluded from the national divorce registration system.

MARRIAGE

Counts and Rates

In 1999, a total of 41,343 marriages were held in Louisiana, an increase of 1,799 marriage from the 1998 total 39,544 (Table MD1). Using data reported by the parish in which the marriage occurred, Louisiana's 1999-marriage rate was 9.4 marriages per 1,000 population. This rate was higher than the 1998 rate of 9.1.(Figure MD1, Table MD1). After dropping to a low of 7.9 per 1,000 population in 1988, Louisiana's marriage rates through the 1990's have been stable and have remained above 9.0 per 1,000 population (Figure MD1, Table MD1). National and state marriage rates were approximately equal in the early 1980s, but a steep decline in state rates during the 1980s caused the rates to fall below national rates as the decade progressed. In the 1990s, however, state rates have risen to a level slightly higher than national rates (Figure MD1, Table MD1).

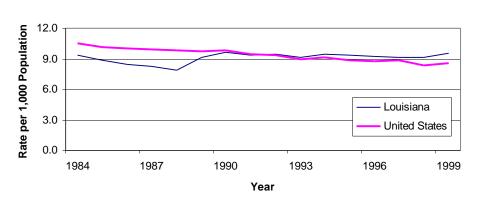


Figure MD1. Marriage Rates
Louisiana* and United States 1984-1999

The *marriage rate* measures marriages occurring in a population during a given period of time. It is calculated by dividing the number of marriages occurring in a geographic area during one year by the total population of the area, then multiplying the quotient by 1,000. The rate is expressed as the number of marriages per 1,000 population. Marriage rates would be more representative of Louisiana resident marriages if they were calculated using the number of marriages to *residents* of an area, rather than the number of marriages *occurring* in an area. Marriage counts by residence of brides and grooms are difficult to quantify, however, because couples often choose to marry outside their residence area.

^{*}Louisiana rates are based on parish of occurrence for all parishes

Table MD1.
Marriage Counts and Rates
Louisiana and United States, 1984-1999

	Louis	iana	United States
Year	Number	Rate* +	Rate*
1984	41088	9.3	10.5
1985	39357	8.9	10.1
1986	37459	8.5	10.0
1987	36185	8.3	9.9
1988	33974	7.9	9.8
1989	38574	9.1	9.7
1990	40443	9.6	9.8
1991	39161	9.3	9.4
1992	40053	9.4	9.3
1993	39364	9.1	9.0
1994	40405	9.4	9.1
1995	40516	9.3	8.9
1996	40221	9.2	8.8
1997	39662	9.1	8.9
1998	39544	9.1	8.4
1999	41343	9.5	8.6

^{*}Rate per 1,000 population

Source: Louisiana State Center for Health Statistics, National Center for Health Statistics

Age of the Bride and Groom

In 1999 the largest proportion of Louisiana brides (26.9%) fell into the 20-24 year age group, while the largest proportions of grooms were fairly evenly distributed between the 20-24 and the 25-29 year age groups (22.8% for each age category) (Table MD2).

Table MD2.

Marriage Counts by Age of Groom and Age of Bride

Louisiana, 1999

Age of																
Groom		Under 15	15-17	18-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	65-69	70+	Unk.
Total	41343	*	647	3321	11122	8735	5603	4130	3027	1927	1016	490	272	165	165	720
LT-15	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
15-17	97	*	43	42	8	*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
18-19	1470	-	241	772	379	55	15	*	*	*	-	-	-	-	-	*
20-24	9432	-	303	2014	5639	1141	225	73	17	*	*	*	-	-	*	1212
25-29	9454	-	37	351	3720	3925	1013	280	74	24	5	-	-	-	-	25
30-34	6366	-	18	79	919	2260	1978	737	255	86	14	*	*	-	-	17
35-39	4614	-	*	39	305	844	1344	1251	563	199	43	7	5	-	-	12
40-44	3313	-	-	10	82	300	637	942	873	356	81	17	*	*	*	8
45-49	2326	-	*	*	27	127	233	505	646	536	188	46	7	5	*	*
50-54	1557	-	-	-	16	42	97	207	366	403	303	93	22	*	*	*
55-59	846	-	-	*	7	9	27	78	148	196	200	126	39	9	6	-
60-64	480	-	-	*	*	8	16	25	48	79	100	101	69	23	8	*
65-69	258	-	-	*	-	*	5	13	17	27	40	43	65	44	23	*
70+	344	-	-	-	-	*	5	5	16	10	39	45	51	70	86	14
Unk.	759	-	-	8	19	17	8	11	3	6	*	9	9	9	37	620

[&]quot;*" In cell refers to counts less than 5 but greater than 0.

^{*}Louisiana rates are based on parish of occurrence for 64 parishes

The average age of Louisiana brides in 1999 as in 1998 was 30.0 years. The average for grooms was 32.4 years. Over the past few years, there has been a steady increase in the ages of men and women who marry in Louisiana (Table MD3).

Table MD3. Average and Median Ages of Brides and Grooms Louisiana, 1992-1999

Year of	Average Ag	Average Age in Years		je in Years
Marriage	Bride	Groom	Bride	Groom
1992	28.6	31.0	25.3	27.5
1993	28.7	31.0	25.4	27.6
1994	29.0	31.0	25.6	27.8
1995	29.4	32.0	26.1	28.2
1996	29.6	32.0	26.3	28.4
1997	29.8	32.3	26.4	28.7
1998	30.0	32.4	26.7	28.8
1999	30.0	32.4	26.8	28.9

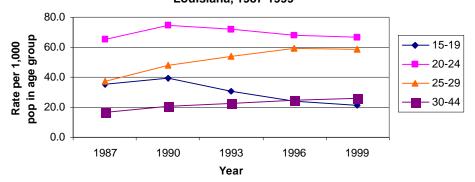
During the 1990s, there has been a decrease in the rates of marriage in younger age groups, and an increase in rates seen in older age groups. Following a rise in the early 1990s, marriage rates have declined during the 1990's among men and women below age 24. This same time period has seen a steady increase in marriage rates for both men and women over age 24 (Table MD4, Figures MD2 and MD3).

Table MD4. Marriage Rates* by Sex and Age Louisiana. 1987-1999

	Louisiana, 1307-1333									
_		15-19		20-	20-24		-29	30-44		
	Year	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	
_	1987	35.4	14.0	65.2	63.3	37.6	47.3	16.4	21.1	
	1990	39.6	15.8	74.7	71.9	47.8	58.2	20.6	25.5	
	1993	30.7	12.1	71.7	65.3	53.8	60.5	22.5	25.8	
	1996	23.8	9.8	68.0	59.2	59.1	64.5	24.7	28.0	
	1999	21.6	8.4	67.0	58.3	58.8	68.7	25.9	30.6	

^{*}Rate per 1,000 sex/age-specific population

Figure MD2. Marriage Rates among Females by Age Group Louisiana, 1987-1999



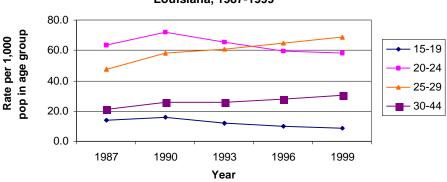


Figure MD3. Marriage Rate among Males by Age Group Louisiana, 1987-1999

Prior Marital Status

In Louisiana in 1999, 49.1% of all marriages were first marriages for both the bride and the groom, 60.1% of both brides and grooms observed independently had never been married(Table MD5). In 22.6% of Louisiana's 1999 marriages, both the bride and the groom were previously divorced; 35.1% of all brides and 35.4% of all grooms were previously divorced (Table MD5).

Table MD5.

Marriage Counts by Previous Marital Status of Bride and Groom
Louisiana. 1999

		Louisiai	ia, 1333						
		Previous Marital Status of Bride							
Previous Marital Status		Never			Marriage				
of Groom	Total	Married	Widowed	Divorced	Annulled	Unknown			
All	41343	25157	1232	14522	38	394			
Never Married	25253	20301	245	4591	17	99			
Widowed	1052	161	355	532	*	*			
Divorced	14655	4615	626	9355	16	43			
Marriage Annulled	48	24	*	18	*	-			
Unknown	335	56	*	26	-	251			

In the past 12 years, Louisiana has experienced a decline in the number of marriages in which both the bride and the groom were never married, and an increase in the percent of marriages in which both the bride and groom were previously divorced (Table MD6).

Table MD6.
Percents of Marriages by Previous Marital Status of Bride and Groom
Louisiana, 1987-1999

		Never Married				
Year	Bride	Groom	Both	Bride	Groom	Both
1987	62.7	63.0	51.7	29.7	30.1	18.0
1990	63.2	63.3	52.0	31.8	32.3	19.9
1993	60.7	61.2	49.3	34.3	34.6	21.8
1996	60.0	60.5	48.4	34.9	34.9	22.2
1999	60.8	61.1	49.1	35.1	35.4	22.6

1999 median ages in marriages of previously divorced brides and grooms were approximately 17 years higher than those in marriages between never-married brides and grooms (Table MD7).

Table MD7. Average and Median Age of Bride and Groom at this Marriage, by Previous Marital Status Louisiana, 1999

	Average Age		Media	n Age
Previous Marital Status	Bride	Groom	Bride	Groom
All	30.0	32.4	26.8	28.9
Bride Previously Unmarried, Groom Previously Unmarried	24.2	26.1	22.5	24.3
Bride Previously Unmarried, Groom Previously Married	29.6	35.9	27.6	33.5
Bride Previously Married, Groom Previously Unmarried	32.6	31.5	30.7	29.7
Bride Previously Married, Groom Previously Married	39.9	43.2	38.3	41.3

Race of Bride and Groom

In 1999 96.3% of Louisiana marriages were between bride and groom of the same race (excluding unknown races and assuming that briders and grooms of *other*¹ races are same-race marriages). In 66.8% of marriages, both were white. In 28.7% of marriages, both were black. In 0.7% of marriages, both were of another race, that is neither White or Black (Table MD8, MD9). 3.0% of marriages were mixed race (excluding unknown races and assuming that brides and grooms of *other* races are same-race marriages), with 1.9% of total marriages being mixed race marriages between whites and blacks (Table MD8, MD9). If *other* race brides and *other* race grooms are assumed to be of different races, mixed marriages account for 3.8% of all marriages, and same-race marriages account for 95.6% of all marriages.

Table MD8. Marriage Counts by Race of Groom and Race of Bride Louisiana, 1999

	Race of Bride								
Race of Groom	All Races	White	Black	Other	Unknown				
All Races	41343	28425	12163	614	141				
White	28211	27655	244	262	50				
Black	12507	557	11881	42	27				
Other	482	153	22	307	-				
Unknown	143	60	16	*	64				

^{*}In Cell refers to count greater than 5 but less than 0.

Table MD9. Percent of Total Marriages by Race of Groom and Race of Bride Louisiana, 1999

	Race of Bride								
Race of Groom	All Races	White	Black	Other	Unknown				
All Races	100.0	68.8	29.4	1.5	0.3				
White	68.2	66.9	0.6	0.6	0.1				
Black	30.3	1.3	28.7	0.1	0.1				
Other	1.2	0.4	0.1	0.7	-				
Unknown	0.3	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.2				

Other refers to race other than White or Black

Month of Marriage

There was an average of 3,432 marriages (8.3% of all marriages) each month in Louisiana in 1999. In January, the number decreased to 2.,547 (6.2% of all marriages); in May, it increased to 4,129 (10.0% of all marriages) (Figure MD4, Table MD10).

Percent of Total Marriages 12 10 9.8 9.5 10 8.5 8.2 7.6 7.5 7.5 8 6.2 6 4 2 0 Feb. Mar. Apr May June July Aug. Sept. Oct. Nov. Dec. Jan. **Month of Occurrence**

Figure MD4. Percentage of Marriages by Month of Occurrence Louisiana, 1999

Table MD10. Counts and Percents of Marriages By Month of Occurrence Louisiana, 1999

Daile

			Daily
Month	Number	Percent	Average
Total	41343	100.0	113
January	2547	6.2	82
February	3110	7.5	111
March	3134	7.6	101
April	3529	8.5	118
May	4129	10.0	133
June	4045	9.8	135
July	3935	9.5	127
August	3172	7.7	102
September	3102	7.5	103
October	3588	8.7	116
November	3390	8.2	113
December	3508	8.5	113
Unknown	154	0.4	-

DIVORCE

Counts

Divorce reports are submitted by approximately 70% of the 64 parishes in Louisiana each year. In 1999, 45 parishes submitted reports of divorces to the state. Many of the certificates that were submitted contained incomplete information. There were a total of 13,496 divorces in the 45 parishes which submitted divorce counts. No counts were available for 19 of Louisiana's 64 parishes (Table MDP1).

The *divorce rate* measures divorces occurring in a population during a given period of time. It is calculated by dividing the number of divorces occurring in a geographic area by the total population of the area, then multiplying the quotient by 1,000. The rate is expressed as the number of divorces per 1,000 population. Because of underreporting of divorces by many parishes in Louisiana, it is not possible to calculate state-level divorce rates using data submitted by all 64 parishes.